

To the Fry family, Postmaster Heffner and Distinguished Guests: It is a humbling honor for me to be here with you.

Today, we pay tribute to the life of a true American hero, Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry, a loving husband and father who gave his life so that others might live and all Americans could live in freedom. To hear Sergeant Fry's story of service and sacrifice for country is to peer into the soul of the American spirit. Lincoln would have called his sacrifice the "last full measure of devotion." The Bible describes it as "the greatest love of all." Sergeant Fry would have called it just doing his duty.

Many of us talk of patriotism. Gunnery Sergeant Fry personified it. His story is a monument of inspiration to all who hear it. Born in Lorena in 1977, John David Fry joined the Marines to serve his country at the age of 18. At the time, the Marines were looking for a few good men. In him they found the best of the best. Sgt. Fry chose to become an explosive ordinance disposal technician, an EOD. I wonder, what courage and values must it take to choose to disarm bombs? Surely, he had to know he was putting himself in danger in order to protect the lives of his fellow Marines.

In September of 2005 Sergeant Fry was deployed to Iraq with the 8th Engineer Support Battalion, 2nd Marine Logistics Group, II Marine Expeditionary Force out of Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. While in Iraq, Sergeant Fry saved countless lives by rendering safe numerous bombs, including one of the largest car bombs found in Fallujah. He once went into a home to find a bomb strapped to a mentally retarded young Iraqi boy, who had been beaten and chained to a wall. Sgt. Fry, the father of three young children, risked his life to save the life of someone else's child in a foreign land. That is the kind of person he was. Sergeant Fry turned down a Bronze Star and a ticket out of Iraq after a serious wound.

Why did this great American do it? Because he said he just wanted to do what he was supposed to do. He was proud to be a Marine and proud to serve his country. Have you ever noticed how humble the true heroes are? Seven short day before this 28-year-old Marine with a wife and three young children was to be sent back home, he volunteered, when he didn't have to, to defuse one more explosive device, this time in Al Anbar province. Sergeant Fry found three bombs that night and defused all of them, but the insurgents had hidden a fourth bomb under the last bomb. It exploded and this brave Marine who had saved so many lives, finally gave his own life. Sergeant Fry wasn't the only one to sacrifice for his country that night. His mother lost a son. His wife lost her husband, and his three children lost their loving father. Only the heart can measure the depth of that kind of sacrifice.

To Beth, Malia, Kathryn, Gideon and C.L., you might not have worn our nation's uniform, but you have surely served our country through your deep, personal sacrifice. We not only honor your loved one today, we honor you. To Kathryn, Gideon and C.L., I want to say that I hope you will always remember that your father loved you so much, that he was willing to give his life to protect you and our country. I know how you must miss him, but please always remember, your father gave you the purest, most unselfish love of all, and you will carry that love with you for the rest of your lives.

It is my hope that all who visit this post office will be inspired by the life and service of Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry. If so, his spirit will live on through us, and we will be better and do better. God blessed us all with the life of John David Fry. Now, I pray that He will forever keep this good and faithful servant in that special place in heaven reserved for those who have laid down their lives for their neighbors. God bless you, Sergeant Fry and your loving family. Semper fi.